

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES



The Division of Nutritional Health and Services

Nutrition in Focus

Middle Adulthood (36-64 years)

It is important to maintain optimal nutrition during this period of life. The sequelae of chronic dietary deficiencies, nutritional excesses and imbalances, and other risk factors experienced during earlier stages begin to manifest during this stage. However, nutritional health behaviors targeted towards prevention are essential. Given the changing nutritional needs of males and females during this stage, healthy behaviors should be reinforced by nutritional education. The resiliency of the body creates opportunities to prevent and, in some cases, reverse some risk factors. Quality of life and length of life are greatly influenced during this stage.

What are the consequences of poor nutrition?

- ⇒ The risk of obesity and chronic diseases is increased by unhealthy eating and sedentary lifestyles.
- ⇒ Women are at an increased risk for osteoporosis during the peri-menopausal period and thereafter.
- ⇒ Men and women are at increased risk for heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and stroke.
- ⇒ Reduced productivity and lowered resistance to acute infections can be due to poor nutrition.
- ⇒ Alcohol increases the risk of an inadequate diet, dehydration, low-blood sugar, and infertility.

What are we doing?

- ⇒ Providing culturally consistent messages to promote healthy eating and physical activity through the *Eat for Health* and the *5-A-Day for Better Health* Campaigns. (*Assurance*)
- ⇒ Strengthening outreach efforts to increase adult participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). (*Assurance*)

- ⇒ Educating teachers, nutritionists, and community-based educators to provide more effective nutrition education. (*Assurance*)
- ⇒ Designing a population-based monitoring and surveillance system that will assess the nutritional health status of all Missourians, regardless of age or income level. (*Assessment*)

How are we doing?

- ⇒ Adult participation in the CACFP has increased from 280 in 1998 to 439 in 2000.

What more can we do?

- ⇒ Continually seek effective and creative methods to communicate nutrition messages to adults and families in a variety of forums - school, church, the workplace, and recreational venues.
- ⇒ Assure that disadvantaged adults and families have access to adequate nutrition and health services.
- ⇒ Assess regularly and systematically the nutritional status of adults in Missouri, and develop policies and programs to address unmet needs.

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